

THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 2003

GAY PRIDE: Focus is 'extremely disappointed'

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Springs welcomes anybody to our community — anybody who wants to contribute and participate in civic functions and enjoy the lifestyle they want."

Former Mayor Mary Lou Makepeace recognized PrideFest with a proclamation when she served in office from 1997 until this year.

Rivera made cutting benefits for same-sex partners of city workers his first order of business after the election.

In issuing the proclamation, he expanded it in two ways. He declared June 23-29 "PrideFest Week" and attached the council's name to the document after surveying members and finding a majority backed it.

The five-paragraph document says the June 29 PrideFest "provides educational opportunities and recognizes diversity within the Colorado Springs community." It thanks the gay and lesbian center for its contributions and says the Springs "is known as a city dedicated to embracing diversity."

Ellie Collinson, a gay and lesbian center board member, said many people were angry after the April 22 vote, which directed City Manager Lorne Kramer not to include same-sex benefits in his 2004 budget proposal.

Some board members talked to individual council members since then about helping the gay community in other ways, Collinson said. She believes the proclamation is a product of those discussions.

"I don't think this is the last step of this particular council in actions toward our community," she said, declining to elaborate.

The proclamation's sentiment is not shared by all on the council. Councilman Tom Gallagher opposed it because he sees no reason the council should promote a lifestyle some oppose.

Focus on the Family Vice President Tom Minnery said he is "extremely disappointed" by the action.

"If it's going to politicize sexual activities, council ought to politicize healthy sexual activities that promote the moral values of the vast majority of this community.

"I think these members of City Council ought to pay attention to those who elected them," said Minnery, who celebrated Rivera's win election night.

GT 6/11/03

Council backs notice praising gay PrideFest

By ED SEALOVER
THE GAZETTE

The same Colorado Springs City Council that recently rejected benefits for same-sex partners of city employees backed a proclamation lauding the annual gay PrideFest celebration and "embracing diversity."

Mayor Lionel Rivera signed the proclamation Thursday and sent it to the Pikes Peak Gay and Lesbian Community Center. Center leaders said this week they are grateful for the recognition.

The move angered some religious conservatives who played a major part in electing Rivera and other council members April 1.



LIONEL RIVERA:
Helped cut
city bene-
fits for
same-sex
partners.

It also raises questions about whether the symbolic gesture runs counter to the council's benefit-cutting move.

Rivera said the two actions are not contradictory.

"The federal government only recognized marriage between one man and one woman, and that's the standard I was using (on the benefits vote)," Rivera said Tuesday. "Colorado

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